

women did under his guidance and leadership. I congratulate Captain Gibson on his retirement, thank him for his service, and wish him the best for the future.

COMMEMORATING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

HON. MELVIN L. WATT

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 19, 2004

Mr. WATT. Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 30th anniversary of the Legal Services Corporation (LSC), a nonprofit organization created by Congress in 1974 to ensure that Americans have access to our justice system regardless of their economic means. For three decades, LSC has lived up to the noble purpose for which it was created—providing legal assistance in civil matters to tens of millions of low-income Americans who would otherwise have gone without counsel. The Legal Services Corporation Act of 1974 was passed with broad bipartisan support in Congress and, thirty years later, broad bipartisan support for a strong federal role in equal justice efforts remains. LSC's past and current leaders, as well as the thousands of advocates who work for LSC-funded legal services programs throughout America, deserve credit for the vital work they do every day on behalf of clients in desperate need of qualified counsel.

Today, there are currently more than 45.2 million Americans who qualify for assistance from one of LSC's 143 grantees nationwide. Legal services' clients are as diverse as our nation, encompassing all races; ethnic groups and ages. They include the working poor, veterans, family farmers, people with disabilities and victims of natural disasters. More than two-thirds of LSC clients are women—most of them mothers.

The legal problems faced by those living in poverty can have serious, long-term consequences for children and, as a result, for society as a whole. The most common types of cases handled by LSC-funded advocates address family law, housing, employment, government benefits and consumer-related issues. For low-income individuals and families, legal services advocacy in these and other areas represents their only means of access to the justice system.

In addition to helping people resolve some of their immediate economic and legal needs, LSC programs also educate people on their rights and responsibilities under the law. With this information, clients can use their knowledge to work within the justice system to re-establish economic independence. With LSC's help, families can maintain their incomes, homes, health benefits and their dignity.

More than two centuries ago, our founding fathers enshrined the importance of equal justice in the preamble to the Constitution, identifying the obligation "to establish justice" as the first specific function of the new government. Justice, then, is not simply another government aspiration; it is the historic mandate of a free society. On the occasion of the LSC's 30th anniversary, members of Congress should take note and pay homage to the Legal Services Corporation and the critical role it has played in helping America live up to this mandate and our highest ideals.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO JUSTIN FLETCHER

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 19, 2004

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to bring attention to the story of a former constituent whose anions in Iraq are a testament to our nation's armed forces. Justin Fletcher, a brave and courageous soldier in the U.S. Army, selflessly put himself in the line of fire to defend America's security interests and ensure a free Iraq. It is a privilege to recognize the dedication and sacrifice of this fine young man before this body of Congress and this Nation.

Justin was flying an observation run over Tal Afar, the Iraqi city sixty miles from the Syrian border, with his commander Stephen Suhr when they were shot down by a hand-held rocket launcher forcing them to make a crash landing. The two soldiers quickly got out of the crashed Kiowa Warrior observation helicopter, found their guns and removed themselves from the line of fire.

After discovering their ammunition was at the crash site, Justin provided cover while Stephen recovered the ammunition. The two soldiers were able to make their way to a U.S. Stryker vehicle where they were stranded for over two and a half hours fighting off insurgents. During the encounter, Justin suffered a broken back, a broken tooth, and a laceration on his face. He received the Purple Heart for those wounds he sustained during combat.

Mr. Speaker, Justin Fletcher is a dedicated soldier who has taken time away from his family and friends to put himself in harms way to defend America and preserve the ideals of freedom. It is a privilege to recognize his courage and conviction here today before this body of Congress and this Nation. Thank you for your service Justin, and I wish you a speedy recovery.

CONGRATULATING EVIE RAFALKO MCNULTY AS ELECTED DEMOCRATIC WOMAN OF THE YEAR

HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 19, 2004

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask you and my esteemed colleagues in the House of Representatives to pay tribute to my good friend Evie Rafalko McNulty on being named the Outstanding Elected Democratic Woman of the Year by the Pennsylvania Federation of Women. Every Democrat in Northeastern Pennsylvania who knows Evie—and most do—knows how much she deserves this award.

For the past 6 years, Evie has served as the Lackawanna County Recorder of Deeds. Evie got her start in politics volunteering on a campaign when she was just 17 years old, working on the campaign for the Democratic candidate for District Attorney in Lackawanna County. After that, she worked on campaign after campaign, including her husband Jim's successful bid for Mayor of Scranton. She has been a member of the Electoral College and a delegate to four Democratic National Con-

ventions, including the 2004 Convention in Boston.

Evie is a staple in Northeastern Pennsylvania politics. She has advanced the role of women in a field that has traditionally been dominated by men. She works very hard for the Democratic Party and its candidates and she knows how to get things accomplished. Evie is not shy. She is never afraid to speak her mind and she can tell a good story. She is outgoing and makes everyone feel comfortable. The saying "There are no strangers, only friends I haven't met yet" truly fits this remarkable woman. She works in politics for the right reasons—she wants to make our region a better place.

Evie's interest in government also led her to work with the United States Conference of Mayors and the National Conference of Democratic Mayors.

The Pennsylvania Federation of Women recently presented Evie with the Outstanding Elected Democratic Woman of the Year Award, which is given to women who have made significant contributions within the state, have helped the Federation, aided the Democratic Party and assisted other women in getting elected to office. Previous recipients of the award include Lieutenant Governor Catharine Baker Knoll.

Evie is doing her part to bring along the next generation of Democratic women. In my election of 2002, as well as this year's presidential race, she brought along her young niece Nicole, whom I fully expect will follow in her footsteps.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Evie Rafalko McNulty on being named Outstanding Elected Democratic Woman of the Year. Northeastern Pennsylvania is fortunate to have her as a native daughter, and I am blessed to have her as a friend.

INTRODUCTION OF THE OIL PRICE SAFEGUARD ACT FOR 2004

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 19, 2004

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Oil Price Safeguard Act for 2004, a bill that would tackle the problem of petroleum market manipulation and today's skyrocketing oil costs.

Specifically, the Oil Price Safeguard Act would require the President to make a decision to release oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve if prices stay above \$35 per barrel for two consecutive weeks (last year's average daily price was about \$31 per barrel), and require direct oversight reporting to the House Commerce Committee and Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

The U.S. government currently keeps oil in the strategic petroleum reserve for national security purposes, and to deal with short-term economic problems that could arise from oil shocks. Currently, there are 669 million barrels of oil in the reserve—enough to last 90 days if all foreign sources of oil were denied to the United States. Since the creation of the SPR in the early 1970s, it has only been used once—during the first Gulf War. After the SPR was drawn down during the first days of the Gulf War, crude oil prices dropped nearly \$10